



Malta Bus Archive

Biography – Salvatore Mifsud



1924 passport photo for Salvatore Mifsud

BORN – 11th October 1902 in Cospicua – son of Giovanni Mifsud

DIED - ???

Passport Application in 1924 – destination Tunis. This would explain the gap between 1923 and 1928 where he does not appear in the Police Commissioner’s Occurrence Books (see below).

Driver of several buses –

- Various in the fleet of the Cospicua Motor Car Company (CMCC) during 1923
- “2108” – single mention in early September 1928 and believed to be a misquote for another number
- 620 in 1928 & 1929
- 3276 – a single mention in June 1930
- 3123 from 1930 onwards.

His father (Giovanni / John) is listed as being the owner of bus 3123 when the contract between the Government and the newly appointed Route Manager on the Cospicua route was signed in April 1931.

He is then listed as the owner of several generations of bus 3123 from 1937 when his father died (technically owner on behalf of all the heirs of his father). The then current bus remained in his name until sold on in April 1952.

Listed as the owner of two generations of bus 3320 from June 1934 through March 1937.

Listed as the owner of two former buses converted for use as trucks during World War 2 – 7840 (the former 3123 which he was already owner of) – from 1941 to January 1945 ; 8231 (the former 2059) – from August 1942 to August 1944.

Full details of these various vehicles can be found below.

Listed on Christmas Day 1923 as living at 127 Strada S. Michele, Cospicua

Listed on his 17th March 1924 passport application as living at 15 Strada Felice, Cospicua (and as a motor driver).

Listed on 19th December 1928 as living at 50 Strada Maria, Zebbug

Listed on 25th April 1932 as living at 64 Strada Maria, Zebbug

By the time he bought bus 3320 in 1934 he is listed as living in Rabat (*exact address to be confirmed*)

Possibly listed on the 1945 Electoral Roll as living at 20 Dingli Road (Hal-Bajjada), Rabat – this is presumed to be the right man

NOTE - There is also a “Salvu Mifsud” listed in the 1945 Electoral Roll as living at 64 Hal-Bajjada Street, Rabat, with a number of other Mifsuds living nearby in other properties on that street.

The Buses associated with Salvatore Mifsud

620 (by 1928 to 1933)

In July 1933 the bus (probably a Chevrolet based on a 1929/30 Floriana photo) was allocated to the B'kara route. It was in need of replacement, and a new bus was recorded as being "in build".

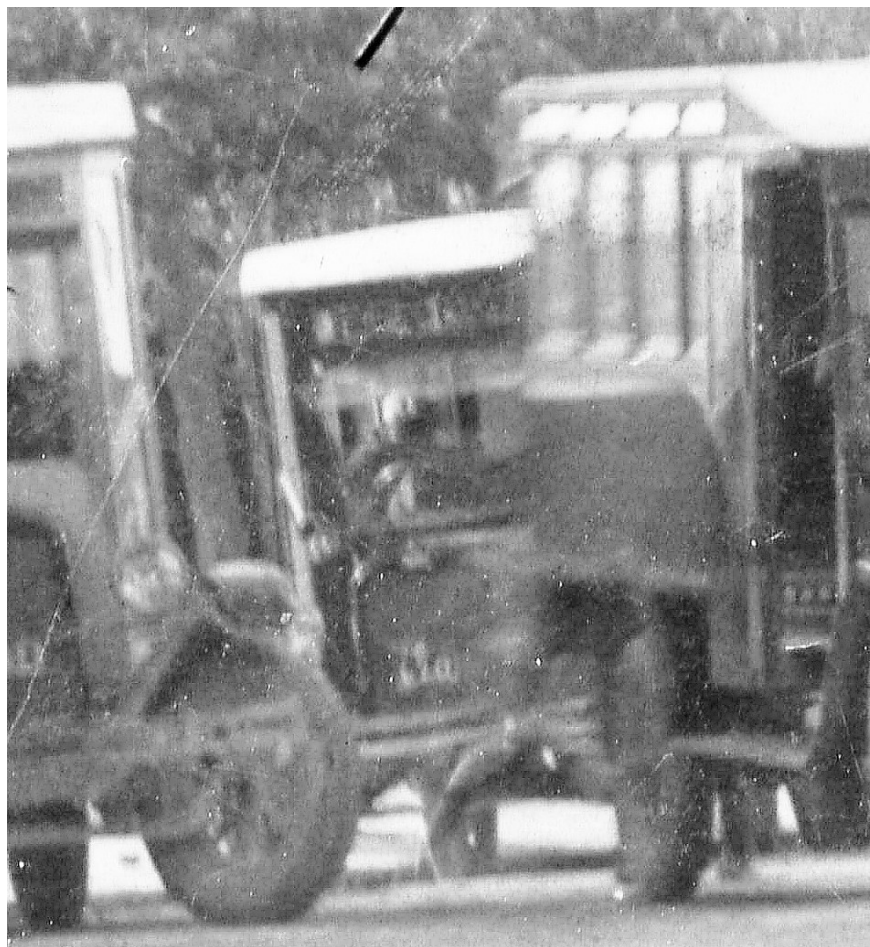
NOTE – a post early 1931 photograph appears to show a late 1920s Chevrolet (?) with a seating capacity of around 16. The photo must be taken after early 1931 as it shows the bus in B'kara route livery. Bus was to B-F layout.

POB notes – earliest mention is mid-December 1928, through to mid-August 1930. For most of the time it appears to have been based in Zebbug and the suffix letter was listed as **620K**. The regular driver in 1928/9 was **Salvatore Mifsud of Zebbug**. Still based in Zebbug in April 1930 (though not with Mifsud as driver?). However the mention for mid-August 1930 lists the suffix letter as being **620M** and the driver was based in Floriana. A June 1929 mention lists the seating capacity as being for 16 passengers.

OWNER – Antonio Scerri, Hamrun – by 4/31 (at time the Route Manager contract was signed)

OWNER – Giuseppe Azzopardi, Qormi – by 7/33

OWNER – Joseph Gasan, BMC Garage, Gzira – 7/33 until replaced shortly afterwards



ABOVE – what appears to be bus 620, around 1929/1930. This is believed to have been the bus Salvatore Mifsud drove in 1928/9 (there is a small chance he may even be the driver just visible in the image).

2108K (1928)

Details not known, other than a single PCOB mention in early September 1928. There is a very good chance that this is a misquote in the PCOB volume for a different bus number.

3123K (1930 to 1935)

The bus, make unknown, was allocated to the Cospicua route by April 1931. It was replaced during the latter half of 1935. It is not certain if an application to extend the chassis from 131" to 157" wheelbase went ahead in 1933, although even if it did not, a new body may have been built at the time.

Note – Undated photographs (front & rear) show the bus badly damaged at Porte-des-Bombes following a collision with the stonework of the gate. The bus was to B-R layout and is believed to be this bus (in which case it appears to have been a Chevrolet). It is presumed to have been in 1935 and the cause of the withdrawal of the bus ??

OWNER – **Giovanni Mifsud, Zebbug** – by 4/31 (at time the Route Manager contract was signed) – until replaced

3123 (1935 to 1941)

Application made in July 1935 to build a new bus (a Willys chassis) for use on the Cospicua route. On 19th January 1941 whilst parked at Panzavecchia Street in Senglea (near the Isola Gate), the bus was destroyed by “enemy action”. The remains were initially stored in HM Dockyard. In July 1941 permission was given to convert the remains into a truck and fit “the engine from car 406”. The number of the new registration was **7840** (see below for more details).

OWNER – **Giovanni Mifsud, Zebbug** – from new

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – 12/37 (on behalf of the heirs of Giovanni) – until destroyed



ABOVE – bus 3123K after its accident at Porte-des-Bombes

Image courtesy of the Joe Cutajar Collection (via Johann Tonna)

3123 (1941 to 1946)

Licence Dormant

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – licence dormant

3123 (1946 to 1966)

In mid-September 1946 an IER was issued for a new bus. It was built on a Bedford OWB chassis (number 30658 – fitted with engine number OWB15581), and with a chassis wheelbase of 14'8" and a rear overhang of 6'11". The B30F bodywork was built by Aquilina, and was 23'8" long, 7'5" wide but no height measurements were listed. It was allocated to the Cospicua route. In October 1952 a Perkins engine (number 3105602) was fitted. The bus was withdrawn and declared scrapped in November 1966.

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – from new

OWNER – Lorenzo Agius, Mosta – 4/52

OWNER – Salvatore Agius, Mosta – 7/60 – until replaced

3276 (1930 to 1935)

The bus during this period was a Ford and operated on the Cospicua route (by April 1931).

OWNER – Carmelo Mizzi, Paola – by 4/31 (at time the Route Manager contract was signed) until replaced

3320 (1930 to 1934)

By April 1931 the bus (make not known) is running on the Cospicua route. It was replaced towards the end of 1934.

OWNER – Giuseppe Farrugia, Paola – by 4/31 (at time the Route Manager contract was signed)

OWNER – Giovanni Saliba, Marsa – by 3/32 (at time the Route Manager contract was signed)

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – 6/34 – until replaced

3320 (1934 to 1942)

In June 1934 permission was given to build a new bus. This was complete by December 1934 and is recorded as being a Dodge Brothers with 26-seat bodywork by Frank Aquilina. It was allocated to the Cospicua route. In November 1942 it was sold to become the replacement **4757** on the Private Hire roster.

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – from new

OWNER – Carmelo Spiteri, Hamrun – 3/37

OWNER – The Noble Charles Sant Fournier, Valletta (on behalf of Messrs B Tagliaferro & Sons) – 9/41 (being used by Anthony Spiteri, Qormi) – until sold

7840 (ex-3123)

In July 1941 an application was made to use the chassis of former bus **3123** (a Willys) to build a new truck. The Chrysler engine (number CMX1304) formerly in car **406** was fitted and new registration **7840** was allocated with the vehicle licensed to operate as a 2-ton open truck. The last document in the file was a notification of sale dated October 1951.

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat** – (owner when a bus)

OWNER – Agostino Bajada, Hamrun – 1/45

OWNER – Francis Bugeja, Ghajnsielem, Gozo – 10/51 (for resale)

8231 (ex-2059)

In October 1941 an application was made to convert the former **2059** (a Chevrolet new in 1928 and stored since October 1933) into a commercial. A Ford engine (numbered A.438792) was fitted at the same time, and new registration **8231** was allocated. The vehicle was licensed as a ¾ ton open truck. The final document in the file is an exam form dated January 1949.

OWNER – Emmanuele Cremona, Floriana (having been the last bus owner in 1933 and stored with him since)

OWNER – Bartolomeo Vella, Mosta – 10/41 (for conversion to a truck)

OWNER – Carmelo Calleja, Sliema – 10/41

OWNER – Emmanuele Tonna, Mosta – 11/41

OWNER – Luigi Zammit, Naxxar – 11/41

OWNER – **Salvatore Mifsud, Rabat – 8/42**

OWNER – Carmelo Petroni, Venezia Garage, St. Paul's Bay – 8/44 (dealer)

OWNER – Salvatore Bartolo, Burmarrad – 9/44n (still current 1/49 – last document)

With regard to the vehicles owned by the Cottonera Motor Car Company, they had –

570 Maxwell 5-passenger touring car
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575 Siddeley Deasy bus (14 passengers) (built on the chassis of a World War 1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

576 Daimler bus (16 passengers) (built on the chassis of a WW1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

577 Siddeley Deasy bus (14 passengers) (built on the chassis of a World War 1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

578 Siddeley Deasy bus (14 passengers) (built on the chassis of a World War 1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

579 Siddeley Deasy bus (14 passengers) (built on the chassis of a World War 1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

580 Unknown make of bus (built on the chassis of a WW1 military ambulance purchased from the Australian Imperial Forces)

All the above-mentioned vehicles entered the CMCC fleet in the spring of 1920 when the company started operations based in the Market Building in Cospicua (just below the entrance to Senglea (l-Isla)). The company ceased trading in 1924 and the fleet sold off piecemeal by auction to new owners.



ABOVE - There is only one known photograph of a CMCC bus, showing one of the Siddeley Deasy buses, and stood next to it is Salvatore Mifsud, so the photograph was probably taken around 1923.

Mentions in the Police Commissioner's Occurrence Books

Salvatore Mifsud

19th January 1923 576 Dropped off passengers at unauthorised stop (turned out he was on a Private Hire job and therefore could drop the passengers there)

25th December 1923 571 The stationary bus was damaged by a passing horse-drawn cart

(gap in records would coincide with his 1924 passport application to travel to Tunis to look for work)

4th September 1928 "2108" Carried more passengers than allowed

19th December 1928 620 Carried more passengers than allowed, and driven on the wrong side of the road whilst turning a corner

31st March 1929 620 Carried passengers between Zebbug and Valletta not as per roster

2nd June 1929 620 Collision with motor car 1146 (no significant damage)

26th June 1929 620 Carried 20 passengers (but only licensed to carry 16)

4th June 1930 3276 Made use of a bus not fitted with a working silencer

14th December 1930 3123 Noted running between Valletta and Zebbug – was allowed to do so

20th May 1931 3123 Accidentally ran over and killed a dog in the street

23rd May 1931 3123 Made use of the bus on the Valletta to Zebbug route, but licensed to only be used on the Valletta to Cospicua route

29th March 1932 3123 Bus locked up for six days as punishment by the Police

25th April 1932 3123 Driving licence & badge handed in to Police for 2 days as punishment

Information sources

- **Police Commissioner's Occurrence Books**

The PCOB's listed every notifiable 'occurrence' that had happened in that police division on a day-by-day basis. Most occurrences were relatively minor by today's standards, but they did include all traffic incidents, especially those involving buses. Each entry would normally include the registration number of the bus, details of the driver or conductor (whoever had broken the rules) and details of the incident itself. These records have proven to be extremely useful in piecing together information about those involved with the bus industry before World War 2. The majority of these records are held at the HQ of the National Archives of Malta in Rabat. A short video about using the PCOBs is available on the Malta Bus Archive YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKCT3fGApJk>).

- **Electoral Rolls for Malta**

Lists of those eligible to vote were published every few years (just before a general election?) and copies of these lists appeared in the Government Gazette publication. These lists included the address that the voter was registered at (so presumably where he was living). Bound copies of the GG are held at the HQ of the National Archives of Malta in Rabat.

- **Passport Applications**

Copies of many passport applications are held at the HQ of the National Archives of Malta in Rabat. Those from around 1916 normally include a photograph of the applicant, as well as details about the individual. The name of the person's father has often been added in by the person processing the application. There is a 70-year closure period for passports, which means that in 2021, applications up to and including 1951 are available for viewing, but more recent applications are subject to restrictions. A short video about the passport applications is available on the Malta Bus Archive YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NWW4afg74I>).

- **Vehicle Records held by the Malta Bus Archive**

Details of all known buses are held by the MBA, from the very first demonstrator bus that arrived in Malta in December 1904, through to the current date. The level of detail varies for each vehicle, and most of the entries from 1931 onwards are based on the official vehicle files that were once compiled by the Malta Police, and are now held by Transport Malta. These files are not currently open for public inspection. Information held by the MBA for each bus can be accessed on request via e-mail (maltabusarchive@gmail.com).